

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release October 18, 1979

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INTERIOR WITHDRAWS DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST DODD

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Robert L. Herbst today ordered the proposed disciplinary action against C. K. Dodd Jr. withdrawn and suggested that a letter of admonition be substituted.

Dodd is the herpetologist for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service who a week ago was given notice of a proposal that he be removed from his job for sending an unauthorized letter on Interior Department stationery, urging a Washington restaurant owner to remove rattlesnakes from his menu.

"This action should clear away a lot of the smoke and confusion that has surrounded the case from its inception," Herbst said. "I think no useful purpose is being served by allowing it to drag along in this fashion."

Herbst added: "The proposed punishment did not fit the offense. Dr. Dodd is a useful employee of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and he has suffered enough.

"At the same time, the public has a right to expect that people purporting to speak for the Government are, in fact, doing so, not simply speaking and writing as citizens."

Herbst said that he had advised Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus about his decision and that the Secretary had agreed with him.

Throughout the past week, Dodd has continued to work at his desk in the Office of Endangered Species, without missing a day's pay.

Dodd was due to reply to the letter proposing his separation from the Service by October 29. Herbst's action negates that deadline and closes the case.

Copies of relevant correspondence are attached.

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

October 18, 1979

Memorandum

To: Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

From: Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Subject: Proposed Removal of Dr. Dodd

I have reviewed a copy of your October 10 letter to Dr. C. K. Dodd, Jr., which served advance notice of your intention to remove him from his position of Zoologist, GS-12, for several reasons, and have discussed the matter with you.

I believe that there is no doubt that a transgression occurred and that Dr. Dodd acted beyond the scope of his authority. However, I also believe that the proposed action is too severe. The employee should not be removed. Therefore, I am directing that your letter be recalled and that you consider other appropriate and constructive measures that may be necessary to preclude similar occurrences. I believe that agency admonishment by letter to Dr. Dodd is sufficient disciplinary action.

I am convinced that Dr. Dodd's principal interest was for the protection of a species that appeared to be threatened and this circumstance should be considered.

As reviewing officer, I am writing to him directly regarding my decision and a copy of that letter is attached.

Attachment

Rob. H. [Signature]



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

October 18, 1979

Dr. C. K. Dodd, Jr.
Staff Herpetologist
Office of Endangered Species
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Dr. Dodd:

Director Greenwalt furnished me with a copy of his October 10 letter to you wherein he proposed to remove you from your position for several reasons. As the reviewing officer, I am making a decision on this matter.

I have discussed the proposed action with Director Greenwalt. While I consider your action to be a management transgression based on existing information, I am convinced that the proposed action is too severe and that you should not be removed from your position. Therefore, I have directed Director Greenwalt to recall his letter to you and consider other appropriate and constructive measures that may be necessary to preclude similar occurrences, including a letter of admonishment to you.

I am convinced that your principal interest was for the protection of a species that appeared to you to be threatened and that this circumstance was paramount in your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Robert L. Herbst
Assistant Secretary for
Fish and Wildlife and Parks